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## Both Sides of the Tracks: Jessup Residents Seek to Dispel Misinformation about Montevideo Road

People who live near the Howard and Anne Arundel county lines claim the amount of residences near possible intermodal facility were underestimated.

By [Elizabeth Janney](#) | June 8, 2011

Jessup residents wanted to set the record straight about their side of the tracks and hear from transportation officials regarding the proposed freight transfer station for central Maryland during a recent meeting.

Rusty Bristow, vice president of the Jessup Improvement Association (JIA), said that Howard County officials were painting an inaccurate picture to the public about sites proposed for the intermodal facility.

Of the four proposed sites for the project, two are in Howard County. These are the locations under consideration:

- Montevideo Road from Howard County line to Dorsey Run Road (Howard)
- Brock Bridge Road near Jessup Correctional Facility (Anne Arundel)
- Hanover Road at Race Road (Howard)
- Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (Prince George's)

The *Baltimore Sun* has published multiple [articles quoting Howard County officials](#) stating that there are 21 homes near the Montevideo Road site, compared with 365 near the Hanover Road location.

"From their information, there aren't that many people on Montevideo Road," said Bristow. "But right across the railroad tracks, there's probably going to be well over 200....New homes [are] going in there—at least 70—right behind Montevideo Court."

Officials came up with the number 21 by looking only on the Howard County side of the tracks, said Bristow. "They never bothered looking on the Anne Arundel side—where we are," he added. "We're being ignored because of Howard County."

County Councilwoman Courtney Watson, who publicized the 21 number, said her information came from Howard County's Department of Planning and Zoning (see photo). She told the *Sun* that because of the number of homes near the Hanover site, it didn't make sense to put the facility there.

Bristow and several others at the June 6 JIA meeting said that they had physically counted more than 200 homes within a quarter mile of the Montevideo Road site. "We're actually going to end up with more people [affected] than Elkridge," said Bristow.

At the JIA meeting with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and CSX officials, residents voiced concerns about ways they could be impacted should the facility come to their neighborhood.

Some said current train traffic has already damaged their quality of life. "I have to listen to the trains all night long," said Cindy Kerr, who lives on Ohio Road. Conductors park on the tracks near her house when they go to sleep at Red Roof Inn, leaving the trains idling overnight, said Kerr. "What's going to happen with these extra trains there?"

Others feared for their health. Rick Oursler, who lives near Oceano Avenue, said that already, "when my wife washes the sheers, the water turns black" from diesel fuel.

Residents also said that the community would suffer because of lack of infrastructure to support tractor trailer traffic, particularly when it came to roads like MD 175 and Dorsey Run.

"Will the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance apply?" asked Wayne Duvall, president of JIA. Transportation officials were not familiar with the act, which ensures that development does not occur unless infrastructure is in place to support it. Duvall said that the ordinance did not apply to several BRAC projects, leaving roads congested.

When asked if there was any favored site at this point, project cosponsors CSX and MDOT said there was not.

"We'll put them all side-by-side and look at them. If there's a site that has more impacts than the other, we'll take a closer look at the one with less," said Sharon Daboin, resident vice president of CSX in Baltimore.

The evaluation process is set to begin this summer, according to the project website.